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W. N. ARMSTRONG, EDITOR.

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CHANGES IN HILO

Coffee Cultivation Has Given the
Town a Boom.

NEW SETTLEMENTS GROWING

A Dozen New Places Open-
ed Up in Olaa.

D. Howard Hitchcock Ready for
Art Exhibition—Hilo Needs
a Wharf Badly.

[Special Correspondence.]

Hilo is in the throes of a boom. When I visited the second city 13 months ago I said coffee was in its experimental stage. I believe today that the pioneers in the industry have it practicable, and it may now be called a success. Whatever improvements are being made here are due to coffee. Sugar has not brought any more people to the district, nor has it added to the capital of the merchants.

The changes that have been made in Hilo during the past 12 months indicate prosperity in business circles, but one merchant told me today that the turn in affairs is due more to the fact that the people realize that better accommodations are needed than to increase in business volume. I leave those who are familiar with the people on the islands to judge whether or not any material changes would be made if there was not more than mere necessity behind it.

Take the hotel as an instance. It was not only that the old building had stood the sun and rains for 40 years that it was relegated to the wood-piles of the inhabitants, but because an increase of travel as well demanded it. If any one thing more than another was needed in Hilo, at least in the opinion of sojourners, it was a hotel, and this opinion was communicated to the people here. Look at the result! A complete transformation has been made, and a visit to Hilo is made pleasant to the extent that one may repose in a good bed, in a new hotel, provided with all modern conveniences, and be sure of a good breakfast in the morning. The hostess, Mrs. Grant, is genial even as she says to the late-arriver: "It's the early bird catches the egg." There's an air of cheerfulness about the place that makes the guest feel welcome and fills him with a desire to remain.

Messrs. Egan and Ragsdale, two young Californians, have just purchased the coffee plantation of Bashaw and Lund at the 22-mile post for \$18,000. The property consists of 300 acres, 75 of which are planted and will bear next year at a profit. Some of the trees even now have a pound of berries on them. This is but one instance of new settlers coming into the coffee belt, and I am told that a dozen new places have been opened in Olaa during the past summer. Far back from the road, in some instances, the Japanese are doing well. Hoshina has a fine plantation, and others are more or less successful. These places, and those as far along the coast as Laupahoehoe, will cause new settlements in Hilo, not as great, perhaps, but on the same principle as Leadville was the feeder that made Denver wax fat.

Considerable interest is manifested in the tour of Consul-General Haywood, C. L. Wright and Frank Dodge. Americans here are of the opinion that if coffee culture in Hawaii is reported upon favorably by Consul Haywood, people in the States will accept it as authoritative, rather than as a boom, and will be inclined to invest their money.

Those gentlemen left the Kinau at Kawaehne, and made the overland trip to Honokaa in a buckboard. They will inspect the various plantations as far as Laupahoehoe, arriving there about Tuesday next; then they will come into Hilo to catch the Kinau on their next trip and do Puna for about three days. Before or after Puna—probably after—they visit Olaa. D. Howard Hitchcock will go to Honolulu on the next Kinau. He has 15 new canvases, ranging from 12x26 to 30x36, new studies and good ones. The young artist has departed from his former style and adopted one which may be considered "Of the French, Frenchy." At the same time, it is an improvement; he pays more attention to composition, and instead of making exact reproductions of nature, as it appears to him, he picks out what, in his opinion, is most pleasing. His new pictures will be seen in the next Art League exhibition.

The island of Hawaii in general, and Hilo in particular, has never been con-

sidered a stronghold of the annexation sentimentalists. On the contrary, the feeling has been reported as leaning in the other direction. The reason is not altogether plain to those who consider but two parties as in the field for supremacy—Annexationists and Republicans.

The annexation opinion is as divided as on the subject of a wharf. On the whole, I think Hilo needs a wharf as much as it needs annexation. On the arrival of the Kinau last night the water was low, and the passengers were sent in the small boats to Waialea. The first boat grounded, and the passengers waded until the rocks were reached, then crawled overland to the backs. The occupants of the second and third boats were, in this respect, more fortunate, for they succeeded in reaching the landing. It rained, though, and rained with as much vigor as on the evening of President Dole's reception to Senator Morgan, and the passengers experienced a genuine Hilo drenching for 20 minutes. For years Hilo has been calling out for a wharf. The last Legislature appropriated \$50,000 with which to build it, and—Hilo still needs a wharf.

Hilo, October 14, 1897.

MONEY IN RHEA FIBRE.

Australian Colonies Interested in the Plant.

Mr. Max Rowl will sail for Australia by the steamship Ormuz, with the object of negotiating with the various Premiers on the matter of the cultivation of rhea, a valuable fibre plant, in the Australasian colonies.

Hazel's Annual for 1897 says: The rhea plant is a variety of the nettle family, which grows luxuriantly in India. From the delicate fibres in its bark the finest and strongest textile fabrics can be produced, and in the manufacture of such fabrics it is unrivaled. The hindrance to its use has hitherto lain in the difficulty and cost of separating the fibres from the gums and cortex of the bark in which they are imbedded. However, an Anglo-Indian chemist, Mr. Gomess, has succeeded in elaborating a chemical process which frees the fibre from the resins in which it is imbedded, by the use of zincate of soda; and this process, after numerous trials, the Indian Government has pronounced a complete success. According to an article in the Times of the 10th of August, 1896, a large demand has consequently sprung up for the "ribbons" or strips of dried bark, and the probability is that the industry may assume enormous proportions, and even rival the cultivation of jute. The fibre may be produced in practically unlimited quantities, and information as to the best means of cultivating the plant and of preparing and drying the "ribbons" for market. Rhea fibre can be worked into every variety of fabric, from velvets to laces. It is especially suitable, from its lightness and toughness, for tents and ship canvas, and it is found to be far more durable than linen. There is a Rhea Fibre Treatment Company, with headquarters in London.

Mr. W. Soutter, manager of the Acclimatization Society's gardens, has kindly supplied us with the following notes on rhea:

It is interesting to note that Mr. Max Rowl is on his way to Australia, in the interests of the cultivation of rhea. We are, perhaps, as well posted as regards its successful culture as Mr. Rowl, and except the visitor comes posted with the information as to how the fibre can be profitably cleaned and extracted, we shall be very little further ahead than we are now. That rhea can be successfully grown in the colonies there is no doubt whatever. The Acclimatization Society has for the past 15 years been growing rhea at Bowen Park with unqualified success, and during that time the society has distributed many thousands of plants of rhea along the entire coast-line of Queensland. There is, therefore, plenty of the raw material in convenient centers for Mr. Rowl to work from, and the society has a large stock to distribute as well. The difficulty hitherto has lain in the separating of the fibre from the woody tissue and the pulp. For many years the Indian Government have offered large rewards for an invention that will do the work successfully, but, so far as I know, the reward has never been claimed, no machine having been invented that gave full satisfaction. Of late years chemical science has been brought to bear upon the question, with the result that the fibre can be more easily separated; but this is done at the expense of both the lustre and strength of it. It is to be hoped that Mr. Rowl will come prepared to teach growers how to prepare the product for the market, for there are hundreds of planters who are ready to grow rhea if the preparations of the fibre for the market is not too costly.

—The Queenslander.

HOLDING HER OWN.

Hawaiian-Born Americans Proud of the Republic.

George Parsons Lathrop says in Leslie's Weekly that Hawaii is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable instances on record of a small republic holding her own, with very slender military power, among the great family of nations. In this respect she reminds one of Switzerland, or of the still smaller Republic of Andorra, in the Basque Provinces of Northern Spain, which continues to this day as a self-governed territory, free from monarchism. The Army of Hawaii numbers only 800 men; but these troops are well equipped with modern weapons and accoutrements, and thoroughly disciplined. Of the eight companies forming the army, or, rather,

the regiment, that protects the islands, two—Company E and Company F—are regulars, always on duty and under pay. Captain Broome was a regular officer, but declined to take any pay, preferring to serve gratuitously because he did not need money, and was chiefly interested in doing what he could to aid the young Republic in an unselfish spirit of American love of liberty.

The six other companies are made up of volunteers, who receive no money compensation whatever, but are as carefully equipped and drilled as the regulars, and subject to a call to active duty at any moment. One of these volunteer or militia companies (differing from the regulars only in not being in service all the time and in not taking pay) is composed entirely of Kanakas—that is, natives of the Hawaiian race. This fact would seem to suggest that the Hawaiians are not opposed to annexation.

Of course, there are many native Hawaiians who are white and are Americans. They were born in the islands, as their fathers lived there long years ago. As I myself was born there, I know something about the conditions. The American residents, most of them have made that country their home (but very generally have retained their American citizenship) have developed the country, have created its local prosperity, and have established a commerce of very large proportions between the islands and the United States. When I was a boy there, all our people spoke and thought of the United States as "home," and there was never any doubt then that the little group so centrally placed in the Pacific must, in the end, become a part of the United States. That was 38 years ago.

TO EVADE THE LAW.

Attempt to Send in Aliens by Way of Victoria.

A late Chronicle tells of an ingenious and presumptuous attempt to evade the alien contract labor law which has just been discovered and thwarted by Immigration Commissioner Walter P. Stradley of San Francisco in connection and co-operation with Consul-General Melvor at Kanagawa, Japan. Sixteen Japanese laborers who were denied opportunity to come directly to this port from Japan by Consul-General Melvor tried to slip in through Victoria, were intercepted in San Francisco, and by direction of Commissioner-General of Immigration Powderly will be sent to Japan direct by the Gaelic, instead of being sent to Victoria, whence they came to San Francisco.

By the Coptic on her last trip Commissioner Stradley received advice from Consul-General Melvor at Kanagawa that seventeen Japanese laborers had been refused passage on the Coptic to San Francisco because he had found in their possession labor contracts to be performed in the United States. Being refused passage direct they secured passage by the steamship Columbia to Victoria, B. C. Of this fact the Commissioner was advised. When the Walla Walla arrived recently from Victoria with nearly a hundred Japanese on board a very close inspection was made. Immigration Inspector A. H. Gefney, by close questioning and a comparison of names and other information in his possession, found sixteen of the seventeen Japanese who had been refused passage on the Coptic among the passengers of the Walla Walla.

Commissioner-General Powderly was at once put in possession of this information by telegraph, and today he wired instructions to Commissioner Stradley to deport them directly to Yokohama. Arrangements were made with the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company for passage on the Gaelic, which sails from here September 21st. Yesterday the sixteen were transferred to that vessel and will remain aboard of her until they are landed in Japan.

It is unusual to make deportations to any other foreign port than that from which those thus deported came to this country. But in this case the evidence was so clear and direct that the real destination of these laborers when they left Yokohama was the United States, and that going by way of Victoria was a mere subterfuge, that it was thought best to deport them to Japan rather than to Victoria, as in the latter event there is no doubt that they would seek some other means of entering this country.

It has not yet been learned who contracted for the labor of these men in the United States, but investigations are now on foot to determine that question.

The shipping of the maritime provinces, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, continues to show a most astonishing decrease, and bids fair if the shrinkage goes on at the present rate to be practically wiped out of existence altogether in another decade. During the past 13 years the total tonnage has declined over one-half of the whole, or by 445,226 tons, from 890,810 tons, in 1884, to 445,584 tons in 1896, both years included. In 1884 Nova Scotia had 3,019 vessels, of a total tonnage of 543,885, while she now has only 2,661, with a tonnage of 315,325. New Brunswick owned 1,096 vessels, with a tonnage of 114,719. Prince Edward Island possessed 234 vessels, with a tonnage of 39,213, and now she has 174, with a tonnage of 16,540. In brief, Nova Scotia has 358 vessels and 228,510 tons less, New Brunswick 122 vessels and 192,043 tons less, Prince Edward Island 60 vessels and 22,673 tons less.—Yarmouth (Nova Scotia) Herald.

MORGAN'S LETTER

Written From Honolulu on the
Subject of Annexation.

LOCAL SITUATION AS HE SAW IT

United States Must Occu-
py Pearl Harbor.

With Its Precipitous Shores the
Harbor Can Easily
Be Fortified.

While Senator Morgan was in Honolulu he wrote a letter on the subject of annexation to the New York Herald. Extracts of it were published in the local papers. We reprint it below in full:

There is no active or organized opposition to annexation in Hawaii. Some royalists naturally regret every step that leads to the dedication of the country to free self-government, which is now beyond reversal, and they excite the apprehensions of some natives that annexation will tend to their social degradation. But the effort and its results are insignificant. The less informed classes are free from political cares, and those of the educated classes are free from all jealousy toward the white race. Their desire for annexation is intense and earnestly patriotic.

They are American in the most decided form, without any tolerance of Asiatic theories or forms of civilization. They copy nothing from the Asiatics, while they eagerly adopt the customs and manners of the Americans. If there is any actual controversy about annexation in the Republic the fact is not discernible in any open demonstration that it is at all important. A meeting at Hilo recently, in opposition to annexation, was a failure, the people taking no interest in it. The settled and universal conviction is that this is an American question between American people, as it has always been in our dealing with it. Annexation to the United States, or a protectorate by our Government, are the issues to which all discussion is confined, it being agreed on all sides that the islands will not have the settled prosperity and contentment they need and deserve if their foreign relations are to depend upon their naval power for security and freedom from agitation.

For want of metals and fuel the "sea power" of the islands is far short of the importance of their agricultural productions and of their value as a commercial center and as a place of rest and refreshment and for supplies and repairs for navigators. We can supply these wants quicker and more conveniently than any other country, and this fact must necessarily draw Hawaii to us "with hooks of steel" that no power can destroy. In this respect our only rival is Great Britain, through the Straits of Fucia.

Whatever country furnishes ships of war and of commerce to Hawaii will find here ample material for supplies and a body of native sailors that are not excelled in many of the best qualities by any people in the world. This will be the nucleus of our supremacy in the navigation and commerce of the North Pacific. As to the wealth and power this will bring us, all commercial history is full of narrative. If conjecture need to be indulged, the wildest fancy would become tame in the presence of obvious facts that already are visible at Honolulu.

VALUE OF PEARL HARBOR.

Considered in a sense as broad as the distance between Asia and America, there is no place on either coast, or in any island of the Pacific Ocean, that is of equal importance and value to commerce or naval power as Pearl Harbor. The reasons are that it is central in the arc of the great circle, north of the equator, that is described by the coasts of Asia and America. It has the best climate of any port on either coast. It affords the best and cheapest shelter to shipping, and the least expensive ways for provisioning, repairing, coaling and watering vessels of any size.

The sea line of the harbor is a coral reef, that is about eight miles from the shore of the harbor, in its inland stretch, on a direct line. The bay divides into three bodies of water as it reaches inland, all nearly of equal size and depth. The peninsulas that thus divide the waters approach the entrance through the outer bar—the coral reef—within a distance of three miles, and command it absolutely. Inland, the shores of the harbor, with their meanderings, are included in a space about six miles wide, as will be seen by consulting a chart of the harbor. The outer bar is of soft corals, and easily removed by pumping, and the space to be dredged is less than a half mile.

All these questions are put at rest

by the dredging of the same kind of a bar at Honolulu, not six miles further up the coast, and are no longer debatable. The work is of the lightest character of sea dredging. Both outside and inside this narrow reef the water is over 60 feet deep, and Pearl Harbor, from the bar to its extreme limits inland, is without any obstruction and is of sufficient depth for the largest ships. Five hundred sail could easily be moored to the shores in positions of perfect safety.

Deep water is found all along the shores of the bay, all of which are perpendicular walls of stone. They could scarcely be more regular or useful if they had been built by skilled workmen. On the side of the bay next to Honolulu hills from the sea coast are from 100 to 500 feet high. Guns on these elevations would easily command the entrance to both harbors, while within Pearl Harbor and back of Honolulu the points available for harbor defense could scarcely be more advantageous.

The cost of land for these works will be what the United States chooses to give. It should be what a court and jury would award on a full hearing. The courts here are very high models of wisdom and justice. The channels of Pearl Harbor are all deep, with rock-bound shores that are perpendicular. A vessel can be moored at almost any place along miles of shore line and will be out of sight from sea, except the top riggings. The largest ship can easily turn around in the narrowest parts, while a dry-dock can be constructed at a low cost at many places in Pearl Harbor with walls excavated in the rock.

Commander H. E. Nichols, commanding the Benington, is now completing the survey commenced by Admiral Walker. When his report is made the technical facts will appear, which present the outward summing as they appear to the eye of the ordinary observer.

Enough is obvious to the most unskilled person to create the firm conviction that Pearl Harbor cannot be excelled as a location for a naval station, or a great seaport, or a fortress in the sea, or as the site of great cities, or in furnishing beautiful homes for the industrial classes or for wealthy people, in a soft and temperate climate, where nature reveals in the beauty of flowers and the richness of fruits and in the life-sustaining productions for the support of dense populations. How the United States can do without this harbor—to say nothing of the other islands—is the question that this generation must answer at its peril.

JOHN T. MORGAN.

A UNIQUE LIBRARY.

Open Only Four Times Each Year to Its Patrons.

The Howard Library, of Gilmanton, Wis., is certainly unique, says an exchange. It has about 3000 books and an annual circulation of about 8000 volumes, and yet the library itself is open but four times a year. The library was founded by Sidney Howard in memory of his son, Knowlton Peck Howard, who settled in Gilmanton some time during the '50's, and who was killed fighting for the Union during the civil war.

The books of the library are kept in a church, which is used by the people of all denominations, and is called the Union Church. The library is open only four times a year—on the first Saturdays in March, June, September and December. At these quarterly meetings the members gather and return their borrowed books. The striking feature of the management of the library is its method of loaning its books. On the mornings of the winter meetings the members and their families begin to gather at the library, some of them driving six or eight miles, bringing their borrowed books in satchels, bushel baskets, soap boxes and other convenient and inconvenient receptacles, and their lunches in paper packages, pockets and pails. The books returned are examined by the officers and proper penalties are imposed for loss or misuse of books.

Then a business meeting is held, after which the loaning of the books begins, and there may be fun at any time.

Mr. A. brings up an armful of twenty or thirty books, which he wishes to borrow, and piles them on a table beside the president, who is now, ex-officio, the auctioneer. This officer calls off the titles of the books in rotation, adding after each: "How much am I offered?" It is easy sailing at first. No one bids on some of the books, which have been in the library a few years, but when the auctioneer holds up "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," which Mr. B. and Mrs. C. want, the bidding starts, and before Mr. A. gets the new volume he has agreed to return a good share of its cost to the common treasury. Sometimes a rash young man has boasted that he would take a certain book home with him, and his comrades, with many sly winks, quietly raise the bids to the limit of prudence before letting him have it. On a number of occasions a husband and wife, while separated by the crowd, have unwittingly bid against each other and paid a round sum for a book that the family has long been talking about. One volume, which described life in Andersonville Prison, brought more than \$5 to the treasury before it was worn out. This was two or three times its cost. After books have gone the rounds and are well worn, they are frequently sold at auction, and thus many families have secured small private libraries.